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# THESIS

**DECENTRALIZATION, COUNTERINSURGENCY AND CONFLICT RECURRENCE: A STUDY OF THE TUAREG UPRISINGS IN MALI AND NIGER**

by

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December 2012

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This thesis undertakes a comparative study of Mali and Niger to determine possible differences that may have influenced the path of the 2012 Tuareg rebellion. Specifically, it seeks to determine if (1) the degree of governmental decentralization achieved after multiple peace agreements led to less government control in one country over the other, and (2) the counterinsurgency strategies applied by each country during previous rebellions could have led the rebels to believe Mali would be a softer target to attack than Niger.

The evidence indicates that despite an earlier start and an intense public relations campaign, Mali did not achieve a significantly different level of decentralization than Niger by 2011, removing it as a possible influence on the 2012 rebellion. Both countries created new community level governments charged with administering all aspects of civil services but lacked the revenue to operate without international assistance. The difference in counterinsurgency strategies between the two countries, however, is stark. Mali's habitual willingness to compromise with past rebel groups contrasts greatly with Niger's insistence on seeking a military solution to conflicts, giving the 2012 rebels a logical indication of where success would be more likely.

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# DECENTRALIZATION, COUNTERINSURGENCY AND CONFLICT RECURRENCE: A STUDY OF THE TUAREG UPRISINGS IN MALI AND NIGER

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# ABSTRACT

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# LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADC        *Alliance Democratique pour le Changement*
AFRICOM    Africa Command
AQIM       Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
ARLA       *Armeé Revolutionaire pour la Liberation de l'Azawad*
ATNMC     *Alliance Tuareg Niger-Mali pour le Changement*
AU         African Union

CRA        *Coordinasion de Resistance Armeé*

ECA        Economic Commission for Africa
ECOWAS    Economic Community of West African States

FAM        *Forces Armées du Mali*
FAN        *Forces Armées Nigeriennes*
FIAA       *Front Islamique et Arabe de l'Azawad*
FLAA       *Front de Liberation de l'Air et l'Azawad*
FPLA       *Front Populaire de Liberation de L'Azawad*

HCRAD     High Commission for Administrative Reform and Decentralisation

KfW        *Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau*

MFUA      *Mouvements et Fronts Unifiés de l'Azawad*
MNJ        *Mouvement des Nigeriéns pour la Justice*
MNLA      *Mouvement National de Libération de L'Azawad*
MPA       *Mouvement Populaire de l'Azawad*
MUJAO     *Mouvement pour l'Unité et le Jihad en Afrique de l'Ouest*

NGO        Nongovernmental Organization

OEF-TS     Operation Enduring Freedom-Trans Sahara
ORA        *Organization de Resistance Armeé*

PSI         Pan Sahel Initiative

QDDR      Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review

TSCTI      Trans-Saharan Counterterrorism Initiative
TSCTP      Trans-Saharan Counterterrorism Partnership

USAID     United States Agency for International Development

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# I. INTRODUCTION

## A. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION

Nomadic Berber language-speaking Tuareg populations that span the borders of Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Libya, and Algeria have generally felt marginalized by the central governments of all of the countries in which they reside. This perceived relative deprivation has led to a series of rebellions in Mali and Niger. In the 1980s, Tuareg received training and support from Libyan President Muammar Qaddafi, and several hundred even served in combat in Lebanon and Chad with his Arab Legion. Rebel units began to infiltrate into Mali and Niger toward the end of the 1980s and staged a rebellion between 1990 and 1995.
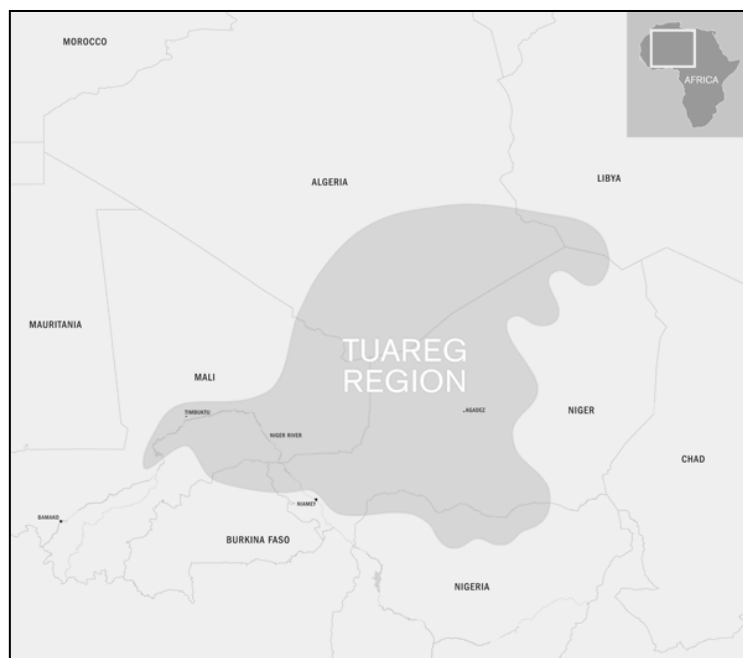


Figure 1.   Tuareg Region (Source:  "Who are the Tuareg?,"
http://africa.si.edu/exhibits/tuareg/who.html, accessed November 8, 2012)

The fighting in northern Mali prompted peace talks in 1991, mediated by Algeria, between President Moussa Traoré of Mali and Iyad ag Ghali representing two of the rebel groups, the *Mouvement Populaire de l'Azawad* (MPA, or the Popular Movement of Azawad) and the *Front Islamique et Arabe de l'Azawad* (FIAA, or the Islamic and Arab

Front of Azawad).[1] These talks produced the Tamanrasset Accord of January 1991. After a coup removed President Traoré from power in March 1991, another agreement, the *Pacte National*, was signed in Bamako in April 1992. This agreement was between the government of Mali represented by Colonel Brehima Sire Traoré and Lieutenant Colonel (and future president) Amadou Toumani Touré, and Zahalby auld Sidi Mohamed on behalf of the Tuareg *Mouvements et Fronts Unifiés de l'Azawad* (MFUA, or Unified Movements and Fronts of the Azawad). The MFUA served as an umbrella organization including four different Tuareg rebel groups: the MPA, the FIAA, the *Armeé Revolutionaire pour la Liberation de l'Azawad* (ARLA, or the Revolutionary Army for the Liberation of Azawad), and the *Front Populaire de Liberation de l'Azawad* (FPLA, or the Popular Front of Liberation of Azawad). Sporadic fighting continued into 1995 as splinter groups split from the negotiating parties in an attempt to gain more concessions from the government before turning to peace.

Fighting broke out in Niger between the central government led by President Ali Saibou and the Tuareg rebel group the *Front de Liberation de l'Air et l'Azawad* (FLAA, the Liberation Front of the Air and Azawad) in 1991. Several other rebel groups joined the FLAA and created the umbrella group the *Coordinasion de Resistance Armeé* (CRA, or Coordinated Armed Resistance), which negotiated for peace in 1994 and signed the Ouagadougou Accords with newly elected President Mahamane Ousmane. The *Organization de Resistance Armeé* (ORA, or Organization of Armed Resistance) continued the rebellion into 1995, when it signed an additional agreement with the state.[2]

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[1] Azawad is the chosen name for the Tuareg homeland; the 1992 Pacte National actually states that "The Government of Mali is not opposed to the name 'Azawad' for these regions. However, it respects the right of the people to decide freely on the name local territory," Pacte National, University of Notre Dame Peace Accords Matrix, last viewed August 29, 2012, https://peaceaccords.nd.edu/site_media/media/accords/Mali_Peace_Accord-proof.pdf; Baz Lecocq, Disputed Desert: Decolonisation, Competing Nationalisms and Tuareg Rebellions in Northern Mali (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2010), 311.

[2] Agreement Between the Republic of Niger and the ORA, University of Notre Dame Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, last viewed September 20, 2012, https://peaceaccords.nd.edu/matrix/accord/49; Thomas Krings, "Marginalization and Revolt among the Tuareg in Mali and Niger," *Geojournal* 36.1 (1995), 62; The groups covered under the CRA umbrella include the Front de Liberation de l'Air et de l'Azawad (FLAA), the Front de Liberation Tamoust (FLT), the Armée Revolutionaire de la Liberation du Nord Niger (ARLNN), and the Front Patriotique de libération du Sahara).

Peace lasted for about a decade on the basis of these agreements which promised greater autonomy and resource distribution.[3]

Mali saw a renewed rebellion in 2006–2009 by rebels claiming that the government had failed to implement the peace agreements. These rebels formed the *Alliance Democratique pour le Changement* (ADC, the Democratic Alliance for Change) and a later splinter group that would emerge in 2007, the *Alliance Tuareg Niger-Mali pour le Changement* (ATNMC, or the Niger-Mali Tuareg Alliance for Change) led by Ibrahim ag Bahanga. Many rebels incorporated into the military as part of the previous peace negotiations defected to the insurgents with large quantities of heavy weapons and supplies.[4] Similarly, fighting in Niger exploded in 2007 when *le Mouvement des Nigeriéns pour la Justice* (MNJ, Nigerien's Movement for Justice) attacked a government position, demanding the full implementation of the 1994 peace agreement. In addition, the MNJ attacked foreign uranium companies and kidnapped their employees, as well as conducted hit-and-run attacks on the Nigerien security forces. The MNJ also drew Tuareg defectors from the army. In both cases, new agreements between the governments and rebels were reached and peace returned briefly.[5]

When the revolt against Qaddafi began in 2011, he sent representatives to northern Mali and Niger to recruit for his army. Young men were offered up to $1000 a

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[3] Background information on the 1990s rebellions comes from Malian Army Lieutenant Colonel Kalifa Keita, *Conflict and Conflict Resolution in the Sahel: The Tuareg Insurgency in Mali* (Carlisle: Strategic Studies Institute, 1998), 110–115 ; "Mali: A Timeline of Northern Conflict," IRIN, last updated April 5, 2012, http://www.irinnews.org/Report/95252/MALI-A-timeline-of-northern-conflict; Jibrin Ibrahim, "Political Exclusion," *Africa Today* 41, no. 3 (1994), 15–39; Krings, "Marginalisation and Revolt among the Tuareg in Mali and Niger," 57–63; Stephen A. Emerson, "Desert Insurgency: Lessons from the Third Tuareg Rebellion," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 22, no.4 (2011): 669–687.

[4] Lecocq, *Disputed Desert*, 392; "MALI: Armed men seize three military basis in remote north," IRIN, last accessed October 30, 2012, http://www.irinnews.org/Report/59096/MALI-Armed-men-seize-three-military-bases-in-remote-north; Muna A. Abdalla, "Understanding of the Natural Resource Conflict Dynamics: The Case of Tuareg in North Africa and the Sahel," *Institute for Strategic Studies Paper 194* (2009): 6.

[5] Niger profile, BBC News Africa, last updated June 28, 2012, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13943662; Cordula Meyer, "Tuareg Activist Takes on French Nuclear Company," Spiegel Online International, last updated February 4, 2010, http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/uranium-mining-in-niger-tuareg-activist-takes-on-french-nuclear-company-a-686774.html; Peter Gwin, "Lost Lords of the Sahara," Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting, last updated August 18, 2011, http://pulitzercenter.org/reporting/lost-lords-shara.

month, homes, cars, and Libyan citizenship to serve in Qaddafi's defense forces. Hundreds signed up, and after a short training session in the desert joined the thousands of former Tuareg rebels who had relocated to Libya after the 2006–2009 conflict.[6] New recruits and former rebels together were then forced out of Libya when Qaddafi fell, returning to Mali (via a route along the Algeria / Niger border) and Niger.[7] In Mali, the *Mouvement National de Libération de L'Azawad* (MNLA, National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad), was created by Ibrahim ag Bahanga, a leader of both previous rebellions (and former Malian army officer). Although Bahanga was killed in August 2011 in a car crash, the MNLA launched its fight for the independence of the Tuareg homeland Azawad in January 2012, heavily armed with modern weapons from Qaddafi's army.[8] It was joined by radical Islamic rebel groups (Ansar Dine, al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb [AQIM] and later the *Mouvement pour l'Unité et le Jihad en Afrique de l'Ouest* [MUJAO], or Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa) in a

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[6] Tim Lister, "Out of a job, Gadhafi's Tuareg fighters may create new troubles," CNN, last updated September 8, 2011, http://articles.cnn.com/2011–09–08/world/libya.tuareg_1_misrata-tuareg-fighters-malian?_s=PM:WORLD; Boureima Hama, "Kadhafi-recruited Tuaregs return to Niger," Agence France Presse – English, last updated September 4, 2011, http://reliefweb.int/report/libya/kadhafi-recruited-tuaregs-return-niger.

[7] Erin Foster-Bowser and Maya Moseley, "Libya's Migration Crisis of 2011," Civil-Military Fusion Center (CFC), last updated June 2012, https://www.cimicweb.org/cmo/medbasin/Holder/Documents/r017%20CFC%20Monthly%20Thematic%20Report%20(29-June-12).pdf.

[8] The influence of Libyan arms and experience was compiled from news sources at the beginning of the latest rebellion: Andrew McGregor, "A Portable War: Libya's Internal Conflict Shifts to Mali," The Jamestown Foundation, last updated October 28, 2011, http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=38583;

Adam Nossiter, "Qaddafi's Weapons, Taken by Old Allies, Reinvigorate and Insurgent Army in Mali," the New York Times, last updated February 5, 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/06/world/africa/tuaregs-use-qaddafis-arms-for-rebellion-in-mali.html?pagewanted=all; "Arms, Men out of Libya Fortify Tuaregs' Mali Rebellion," MSNBC, last updated February 10, 2012, http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/46340199/ns/world_news-mideast_n_africa/t/arms-men-out-libya-fortify-tuaregs-mali-rebellion/#.T8UZ8I5BR6w; Keita, *Conflict and Conflict Resolution in the Sahel*, 28–29; Jennifer C. Seely, "A Political Analysis of Decentralisation: Coopting the Tuareg Threat in Mali," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 39, no. 3 (2001): 515–519; Yahia H. Zoubir, "Qaddafi's Spawn: What the Dictator's Demise Unleashed in the Middle East," Foreign Affairs, last updated July 24, 2012, http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/137796/yahia-h-zoubir/qaddafis-spawn?page=show.

marriage of convenience.[9] In response to the rapid success of the rebels, several junior Malian officers with support from soldiers angered by the president's handling of the rebellion launched a coup d'état on March 22, 2012. The coup disrupted the entire chain of command and caused the U.S. and France to suspend military assistance programs. The MNLA then rapidly took control of all of northern Mali and declared the independence of Azawad on April 6, 2012.

In contrast, no rebellion was launched in Niger. As early as September 2011, the government in Niamey estimated that approximately 150,000–200,000 people had entered Niger from Libya, many of them ethnic Tuareg who had fought in the Libyan Army.[10] Several academic focus groups and international media outlets estimate that hundreds of Tuareg fighters returned to Niger in that mass of displaced persons, and that some of the members of the MNLA in Mali are actually Nigerien Tuareg.[11] Given that the 1990–1995 and 2006–2009 rebellions were against the governments of both Mali and

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[9] Anouar Boukhars, "The Paranoid Neighbor: Algeria and the Conflict in Mali," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, last accessed November 4 2012, http://carnegieendowment.org/2012/10/22/paranoid-neighbor-algeria-and-conflict-in-mali/e4kt; Damien McElroy, "Timbuktu Islamists cut man's hand off," The Daily Telegraph, last updated April 5, 2012, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/mali/9189282/Islamist-commander-cuts-off-vandals-hand-in-Timbuktu.html; David Zounmenou, "The Sahel: Is there a Solution to the Tuareg Insurgency in Mali?" last updated March 20, 2012, http://www.issafrica.org/iss_today.php?ID=1450.

[10] Scott Stearns, "Niger Says Libyan Instability Undermines Security, Economy," Voice of America, last updated September 16, 2011, http://www.voanews.com/content/niger-says-libyan-instability-undermines-security-economy-129946878/145306.html; Tim Lister, "Out of a job, Gadhafi's Tuareg fighters may create new troubles," CNN, last updated September 8, 2011, http://articles.cnn.com/2011–09–08/world/libya.tuareg_1_misrata-tuareg-fighters-malian/2?_s=PM:WORLD.

[11] Hama, "Kadhafi-recruited Tuaregs return to Niger;" Nathan Kennedy, "Niger: Getting it Right?" The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs, Tufts University, last updated April 19, 2012, http://www.fletcherforum.org/2012/04/19/niger-getting-it-right/; Celeste Hicks, "Africa: Tuareg Rebellion Could Spark Violence in Mali, Niger, and Southern Nigeria," AllAfrica News, last updated March 15, 2012, http://allafrica.com/stories/201203151079.html; Andrew McGregor, "What the Tuareg Do After the Fall of Qaddafi Will Determine the Security Future of the Sahel," The Jamestown Foundation, last updated September 16, 2011, http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=38408; Alex Thurston, "Qaddafi's African mercenaries head home. Will they destabilize the Sahel?" Christian Science Monitor, last updated August 30, 2011, http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Africa/Africa-Monitor/2011/0830/Qaddafi-s-African-mercenaries-head-home.-Will-they-destabilize-the-Sahel.·

Niger, and that Niger shares a border with Libya while Mali does not, why did the 2012 uprising happen in Mali only (at least to date)?[12]

## B.    IMPORTANCE

This thesis will contribute to the collection of knowledge on rebellion in the trans-Sahel region. This is important to U.S. policy due to the destabilizing effect such rebellions have in the region, and the possible safe-havens outside of state control the insurgents may provide to terrorists. The temporary agreement between the secular MNLA and Islamist groups Ansar Dine and MUJAO to join forces in northern Mali at the beginning of the rebellion provides a basis for such concern, as does the marginalization of the MNLA by the Islamist organizations since then. Ansar Dine, with the stated goal of imposing Islamic Law throughout Mali, has committed attacks on Sufi shrines in Timbuktu and elsewhere, and is a known associate of AQIM. Al Qaeda's relationship with Ansar Dine and the MUJAO could allow the terrorist organization to expand their operations in the region, which has been the center of their kidnapping business for several years. Niger and Mali are also members of U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM)'s Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP), including Operation Enduring Freedom-Trans Sahara (OEF-TS), which seeks to "enhance cooperation among the region's security forces."[13]    Understanding the threats they face is key to accomplishing this mission. More generally, the U.S. Department of State's 2010 Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR) emphasizes the need to

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[12] Lansana Gberie, "Is Democracy Under Threat in West Africa? Coups in Mali and Guinea-Bissau, democratic defence in Senegal," African Renewal Online, last updated September 11, 2012, http://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/august-2012/democracy-under-threat-west-africa; Marine Olivesi, "African Migrants Caught in Libyan Conflict Rebuilding Lives in Mali," PRI's The World, last updated May 2, 2012, http://www.theworld.org/2012/05/mali-migrants/; Paul Rogers, "Monthly Global Security Briefing," ReliefWeb, last updated July 2, 2012, http://reliefweb.int/report/mali/risk-intervention; William Lloyd-George, "Africa: 'Everything I have worked for was lost': Thousands of refugees have been driven out of Mali by former Libyan mercenaries," The Guardian, last updated April 1, 2012, http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/mar/29/mali-refugees-painful-people-begging.

[13] United States Africa Command (USAFRICOM) Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership, last accessed May 26, 2012, http://www.africom.mil/tsctp.asp.

"promote stability and security in conflict-affected and fragile states"[14] and the U.S. government's commitment "to preventing and resolving crises and conflicts of many kinds–interstate wars and aggression, coups, insurgencies."[15] This research also builds a foundation for addressing these broader U.S. policy goals.[16]

## C.    LITERATURE REVIEW

The extensive body of literature on rebellion in general and in Africa specifically cannot account for the events in Mali and Niger in 2012. The leading theories indicate that the risk of the Libyan conflict spreading to Niger was similar or higher than the risk to Mali. There is overwhelming agreement among academics that rebellions, revolutions, and civil wars in one state tend to adversely affect their neighbors.[17] The assumption that civil wars are a domestic affair is largely discredited; furthermore, there is often a "regional clustering"[18] of civil wars. Selhyan summarizes this trend by saying "the

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[14] U.S. Department of State, The First Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR): Leading Through Civilian Power, 2010 (Washington, DC:  GPO, 1965), http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/153142.pdf, 42.

[15] Ibid., 121.

[16] "Tuareg, Islamists Join Forces to Run North Mali," France 24, last updated  May 27, 2012, http://www.france24.com/en/20120527-tuareg-islamists-join-forces-run-north-mali;  The Guardian, "Mali Tuaregs and Islamist Rebels to Merge and Create New State,"  May 27, 2012, http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/may/27/mali-rebel-groups-new-state; Anne Look, "Mali Rebels Merge, Plan to Create Islamic State," Voice of America, last updated May 27, 2012, http://www.voanews.com/content/mali-rebels-group-merge-plan-to-create-islamic-state/1105876.html; Tiemoko Diallo and Adama Diarra, "Mali Islamists Attack UNESCO Holy Site in Timbuktu,"  Reuters, last updated May 5, 2012, http://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFJOE84405O20120505; Michael Lambert and Jason Warner, "Who is Ansar Dine?" Global Public Square, CNN World, last updated August 14, 2012, http://globalpublicsquare.blogs.cnn.com/2012/08/14/who-are-ansar-dine/.

[17] Idean Salehyan and Kristian Skrede Gleditsch,  "Refugees and the Spread of Civil War," International Organizations 60, no. 2 (2006):  335; Halvard Buhaug, "Contagion or Confusion?  Why Conflicts Cluster in Space," International Studies Quarterly 52 (2008):  215–220; Benjamin A. Most and Harvey Starr,  "Diffusion, Reinforcement, Geopolitics, and the Spread of War,"  The American Political Science Review 74, no. 4 (1980):  932–946; Randolph M. Siverson and Harvey Starr,  "Opportunity, Willingness, and the Diffusion of War,"  The American Political Science Review 84, no. 1 (1990):  47–67; Kristian Skrede Gleditsch,  "Transnational Dimensions of Civil War,"  Journal of Peace Research 44, no. 3 (2007):  293–309; Ivo H. Daalder, "Fear and Loathing in the Former Yugoslavia," The International Dimensions of Internal Conflict, ed. Michael E. Brown,  Cambridge:  Center for Science and International Affairs, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University (1996): 36–39; David A. Lake and Donald Rothchild, Ethnic Fears and Global Engagement:  The International Spread and Management of Ethnic Conflict (La Jolla:  Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation, 1996), 21–23.

[18] Salehyan,  "Refugees and the Spread of Civil War," 335.

regularity and strength of geographical clustering casts doubt on the conventional assumption that civil wars are independent, domestic phenomena, driven exclusively by processes and attributes within the state where conflict occurs."[19]  Two states that share a border are more likely to experience a spread of conflict from one state to the other. Finally, in line with the geographic relevance of neighboring states, many scholars agree that the spatial grouping of conflict can be explained due to the presence of the same actors and issues across the state boundaries. This would indicate that the conflict in Libya and return of Tuareg fighters should have induced conflict only in Niger, as it borders Libya and Mali does not.[20]

Scholars also emphasize the role and importance of ethnicity in the spread of civil conflict across borders, not as a cause, but as a facilitator.[21]  Ethnic groups that span state borders, like the Tuareg, are likely to influence each other to mobilize and engage their respective governments in violent acts, making the risk of civil war contagion higher when the same ethnic group is found on both sides of the international boundary. Gleditsch summarizes this theory arguing that "transnational linkages may be particularly relevant in cases where disadvantaged ethnic groups are already mobilized in another country and can count on the support of ruling ethnic kin in other states or mobilize among refugees in neighboring states"[22] While not a completely homogeneous body, the Tuareg of Mali and Niger fit this description. Like the theory of the tendency for conflicts to infect neighboring countries, the argument of the spread of ethnic conflict across state boundaries cannot explain the conflict contagion from Libya to Mali and the absence of it

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[19] Ibid., 336.

[20] Buhaug, "Contagion or Confusion?" 215–220; Most,  "Diffusion, Reinforcement, Geopolitics, and the Spread of War," 932–946; Siverson, "Opportunity, Willingness, and the Diffusion of War," 47–67; Salehyan,  "Refugees and the Spread of Civil War," 335–366; Gleditsch,  "Transnational Dimensions of Civil War," 293–309.

[21] Lake, Ethnic Fears and Global Engagement, 5–7; Gleditsch, "Transnational Dimensions of Civil War," 297–298; Buhaug, "Contagion or Confusion?," 216,221.

[22] Ibid., 215–233; Gleditsch, "Transnational Dimensions of Civil War," 306.

from Libya or Mali to Niger. Since the literature on the international nature of conflict contagion cannot explain the situation in Mali and Niger, what about internal explanations?

There are two schools of thought on internal causes and/or facilitators of rebellion. Both are situated within rational choice theory, but identify different motivators: greed vs. grievance. Collier and Hoeffler bluntly state that "war occurs if the incentive for rebellion is sufficiently large relative to the costs."[23] Klare argues that resources like oil and water are the key drivers in modern conflict.[24] Snyder and Bhavnani note that "recent studies of contemporary civil war have found a strong and positive relationship between lootable wealth and conflict…Easy-to-procure resources… 'breed' civil war by supplying the means and motive for armed conflict."[25] Boas and Dunn suggest that resources do not cause conflicts, but can cause them to escalate, noting that "in both Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the integration of extraction and marketing of natural resources to the conflicts occurred only once the conflicts were well under way."[26] The greed theory, however, does not explain the situation in Mali and Niger. Niger has significant resources (uranium), while Mali does not: the flight from Libya should have exploded into rebellion in Niger, not Mali.[27]

The second and older school of thought maintains that conflicts are caused by economic and political marginalization. Studies by MacCulloch indicate that populations

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[23] Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, "On Economic Causes of Civil War," *Oxford Economic Papers* 50 (1998): 563.

[24] Michael T. Klare, *Resource Wars: The New Landscape of Global Conflict* (New York: Owl Books, Henry Holt & Company, LLC, 2002).

[25] Richard Snyder and Ravi Bhavnani, "Diamonds, Blood, and Taxes: A Revenue-Centered Framework for Explaining Political Order." *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49, no. 4 (2005): 563–564; Klare, *Resource Wars: The New Landscape of Global Conflict*.

[26] Morten Boas and Kevin C. Dunn, "African Guerrilla Politics: Raging Against the Machine?" *African Guerrillas: Raging Against the Machine* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2007), 10–11.

[27] Paul Collier, "Rebellion as a Quasi-Criminal Activity." *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 44, no. 6 (2000): 839–842; Patrick M. Regan and Daniel Norton, "Greed, Grievance, and Mobilization in Civil Wars," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49, no. 3 (2005): 319–321; Benedikt Korf, "Rethinking the Greed-Grievance Nexus: Property Rights and the Political Economy of War in Sri Lanka," *The Journal of Peace Research* 42, no.2 (2005): 201–203.

are more likely to revolt when inequality in the nation is high, and that increasing the disparity in income also increases preference to seek change through revolution.[28] Buhaug suggests that marginalized groups on the periphery of large countries are expected to resort to insurgency, and that "when all else fails, aggrieved groups of society often resort to violence to redress their grievance—either by seeking to overthrow the ruling government or by attempting to secede."[29]  Ibrahim contends that disenfranchised groups resort to violence when they perceive that they are not receiving what they believe to be rightfully theirs, whether that is political, economic, or commercial.[30]  Like greed theories, grievance theories cannot explain the outcomes in Mali and Niger. Economic and commercial grievances among the Tuareg in Niger are either equal to or higher than in Mali, so these theories also suggest that Niger should have experienced a rebellion along with or instead of Mali.

The literature on the impact of decentralization on conflict might account for the divergent outcomes in Mali and Niger. Findings on this question are split more or less evenly. Brancati, analyzing the impact of decentralization policies in 30 developing democracies from 1985 to 2000 finds that it "is a useful mechanism in reducing both ethnic conflict and secessionism."[31]  In a study of Mali, Seely contends that decentralization helps to legitimize the national government, consolidate political power, and co-opt separatist movements.[32]  Tordoff argues that centralized states are inherently inefficient, and that decentralized governance with well-trained personnel increases public participation in governance and alleviates grievances. The other side argues that decentralization does not necessarily improve governance or prevent conflict. Ryan argues that democracy in Costa Rica has been undermined by decentralization, due to the

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[28] Robert MacCulloch, "Income Inequality and the Taste for Revolution," *Journal of Law and Economics* 48, no.1 (2005):  93, 114.

[29] Halvard Buhuag, "Relative Capability and Rebel Objective in Civil War." *Journal of Peace Research* 43, no.6 (2006): 691.

[30] Ibrahim, "Political Exclusion, Democratization and Dynamics of Ethnicity in Niger,"  35–36.

[31] Dawn Brancati, "Decentralization: Fueling the Fire or Dampening the Flames of Ethnic Conflict and Secessionism?"  *International Organization* 60, no. 3 (2006):  681.

[32] Seely, "A Political Analysis of Decentralisation," 503–505.

perceived illegitimacy and corruption of municipal leadership. Falleti finds that in many cases real power is not actually transferred to the governors and mayors, leaving them dependent on the national government for resources, making decentralization more apparent than real and thus not affecting conflict risk. Siegle and O'Mahony, studying the situations in Colombia, the Philippines, Ghana, and Uganda assert decentralization decreases risks of civil conflict only where the central government can project security and where there is no large concentration of minority groups. They go on to suggest that "loosening central control triggers an inevitable sequence of ever greater demands for autonomy, ratcheting up the centrifugal pressures on the state. Rather than building a stronger sense of ownership and affinity with the state, decentralized authority accentuates differences between regions."[33] This literature on the negative outcomes of decentralization points out that failure is usually a product of poor implementation. Thus, this literature suggests that (a) greater decentralization decreases the risk of conflict, or (b) decentralization increases the likelihood of conflict, or (c) decentralization has no impact on conflict. This thesis will investigate whether (a) or (b) can explain the

divergence of Mali and Niger in 2012: (a) did greater decentralization in Mali lead to higher risk of conflict or (b) did greater decentralization in Niger lead to lower risk of conflict?[34]

The final relevant literature deals with how counterinsurgency strategy affects conflict recurrence. The conventional wisdom is that heavily military counterinsurgency strategies are associated with an increased risk of conflict recurrence, and that negotiated

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[33] Joseph Siegle and Patrick O'Mahony, "Assessing the Merits of Decentralization as a Conflict Mitigation Strategy." Africa Center for Strategic Studies, last updated September 1, 2006, http://africacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2006/09/Decentralization-as-a-Conflict-Mitigation-Strategy.pdf,1.

[34] Ibid., 62; Tor A. Benjaminsen, "Does Supply-Induced Scarcity Drive Violent Conflicts in the African Sahel? The Case of the Tuareg Rebellion in Northern Mali," *Journal of Peace Research* 45, no. 6 (2008): 819–821; William Tordoff, "Decentralization: Comparative Experience in Commonwealth Africa." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 32, no.4 (1994): 555–580; Jeffrey J. Ryan, "Decentralization and Democratic Instability: The Case of Costa Rica," *Public Administration Review* 64, no. 1 (2004): 81–84; Tulia G. Falleti, "A Sequential Theory of Decentralization: Latin American Cases in Comparative Perspective," *The American Political Science Review* 99, no. 3 (2005): 343.

settlements are found to provide a more durable solution than military resolutions.[35] This study does not necessarily challenge those findings; however, it explores whether an overly compromising negotiation strategy increases or decreases the likelihood of conflict recurrence in a situation where the government cannot deliver on promises made during negotiations. Niger's military counterinsurgency strategy may have made civil war *less* likely in 2012. Mali was far more willing than Niger to limit the use of violence and insist on negotiations, yet the latest rebellion chose northern Mali as their objective.

## D.     PROBLEMS AND HYPOTHESES

The hypothesis of this study is that the historic strategies adopted by Mali in response to Tuareg rebellions had the unintended consequence of making Mali a softer target than Niger for the 2012 rebels. The thesis examines two potentially explanatory aspects of those strategies. First, Mali embarked on a decentralization program early in the 1990s rebellion, which may have reduced the level of state control of Tuareg areas compared to that exercised in Niger. Second, greater emphasis on negotiations, reconciliation, and compromise in previous counterinsurgency strategies in Mali compared to Niger may have given the Tuareg forces pushed out of Libya in 2012 confidence that the government in Bamako would attempt to negotiate, giving them time to gain ground and consolidate their presence in the region. Thus, the hypothesized independent variables are:  (1) the extent of decentralization in each country, and (2) the relative balance of negotiations and military action in previous counterinsurgency strategies.

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[35] R. Scott Moore, "The Basics of Counterinsurgency," Small Wars Journal, last accessed November 21, 2012, http://www.smallwarsjournal.com/documents/moorecoinpaper.pdf, 7, 14–16; J. Michael Quinn, T. David Mason and Mehmet Gurses, "Sustaining the Peace:  Determinants of Civil War Recurrence," *International Interactions:  Empirical and Theoretical Research in International Relations* 33:2 (2007), 167, 173–174, 176; Achim Wennmann, "Renewed Armed Conflict in Georgia?  Options for Peace Policy in a New Phase of Conflict Resolution," *PSIO Occasional Paper* no. 3 (2006), 59–61; Karl R. DeRouen and David Sobek, "The Dynamics of Civil War Duration and Outcome," *Journal of Peace Research* 41 (2004), 304.

### E. METHODS AND SOURCES

A most similar system design (MSSD) will be utilized in this thesis. In addition to the similarities in the Tuareg regions already discussed, Mali and Niger are both poor former French colonies (both gained independence in 1960), 80–90% of their populations are Muslim, and they both transitioned to democracy in the early 1990s. Mali and Niger each have populations estimated at approximately 16 million, administratively and politically divided into eight regions. Each country had free and fairly elected presidents when Tuareg forces were pushed out of Libya. Both the *Forces Armées du Mali* (FAM, Mali Armed Forces) and the *Forces Armées Nigeriennes* (FAN, Niger Armed Forces) maintain 6000 - 7000 soldiers in their ground forces with similar equipment, and both receive military assistance from France as well as the United States through the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP, formerly the Pan Sahel Initiative, then the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Initiative). Both countries have experienced interruptions to foreign aid and international military support due to coups d'état, with Mali experiencing two since 1990 and Niger three.[36]

This thesis uses archival research and secondary sources to determine each country's level of decentralization at the start of the 2012 rebellion and potential links to divergent rebellion experiences thereafter. The analysis will then determine the balance between negotiation and force in each country's previous counterinsurgency strategies, and potential links to divergent rebellion experiences in 2012. The research will next focus on the period between the downfall of Qaddafi in the fall of 2011 and the MNLA declaration of independence in April 2012 for direct evidence of linkages between these independent variables and the dependent variable (rebellion). If Mali is found to have been significantly more or less decentralized than Niger at the end of 2011, the thesis will look for links between greater or lesser decentralization and recurrence of conflict. If

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[36] CIA World Factbook, based on 2012 data unless otherwise notated, last accessed November 21, 2012, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html; IHS Jane's Defense and Security Intelligence & Analysis, last accessed November 20, 2012, https://janes.ihs.com.libproxy.nps.edu/Grid.aspx.

Mali is found to have used significantly more or less force against insurgency in the past, the thesis will look for links between that counterinsurgency mix and recurrence of conflict.

## II.    DECENTRALIZATION AND CONFLICT RECURRENCE

This chapter investigates the potential of governmental decentralization to explain the 2012 rebellion. Both governments committed themselves to decentralization in the agreements that ended the rebellions of the 1990s and the 2000s. Did one deliver on these promises significantly more than the other?  And if so, what was the impact on the recurrence of rebellion (or its absence)?  One conducting research on the decentralization efforts in both Mali and Niger finds the bulk of it is oriented towards the success of Mali, and that while not without some severe challenges to implementation, the population of Mali has embraced decentralization whole-heartedly, and the country sets the example for all of their neighbors in West Africa.[37]   Moreover, there is a greater amount of information available on Mali's decentralization progress as compared with Niger. Combined with Mali's dedicated project to inform the public of the decentralization process and Niger's belated initiation of their own devolution of public administration to the local level (with studies in the early 2000s suggesting Niger was not even attempting to decentralize[38]), one can easily get the impression that Mali was more successful in the process. This chapter evaluates the decentralization progress of both countries up to the end of 2011 to see if such a difference indeed occurs.[39]

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[37] Robert Pringle, "Mali's Unlikely Democracy," *The Wilson Quarterly* 30, 2 (2006), 31–37; Kalifa Keita, "Conflict and Conflict Resolution in the Sahel:  The Tuareg Insurgency in Mali," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 9:3 (1998), 115–119; Robert Pringle, "Democratization in Mali:  Putting History to Work," *United States Institute for Peace Peaceworks* no. 58 (2006), 43–47; Cheibane Coulibaly, "Decentralization in Mali: a constrained responsibility transfer process," (2010), 2–4; with regards to educational administration, Donald R. Winkler and Alec Ian Gershberg, "Education Decentralization in Africa:  A Review of Recent Policy and Practice," (2003), 23; Abdou Togola and Dan Gerber, "An Evaluation of Malian Civil Society's Role in Governance," *Open Society Institute for Africa Governance Monitoring & Advocacy Project* (2007), 2–6, 8,9.

[38] Carolyin Norris, "Mali-Niger:  Fragile Stability," *UNHCR Centre for Documentation and Research, WriteNet Paper* no. 14 (2001), 2, 12–16.

[39] Thea Hilhorst, "Local governance institutions for sustainable natural resource management in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger," *Royal Tropical Institute KIT Working Paper Series* (2008), 12–14.

## A. MALI

The 1991 Tamanrasset Accord and the 1992 *Pacte National* initiated a decade long decentralization process. The government also launched a dedicated campaign to inform the public of the details and progress of the *Pacte National*. Both the newly elected president of Mali, Alpha Konaré, and a burgeoning civil society diligently spread the word of peace and reconciliation as well as the details of the peace agreement.[40]  The Council of Ministers adopted an ordinance in 1991 that created the northern region of Kidal (increasing the number of administrative regions to eight) and 703 urban and rural communes nation-wide.[41]  This produced a four-tier political system:  communes at the lowest level, *cercles* above them, regions above the *cercles*, and the central state at the top. The communes elect their own leadership, who send representatives to the next higher levels. However, decentralization really began only in 1999, when local elections finally took place and the central government completed the hand-over of the administration of land, transportation, education, and health care to elected local governments.[42]

True decentralization did not occur as intended in either of the peace agreements due to financial reasons; furthermore, the handover of responsibility was not accompanied by a handover of funds. The poor financial support to the local level governments, in turn, indicates that no matter how many community government entities were created, they did not have the funding to execute their duties. Under the development tax law, "communes get 80 percent of this revenue, circles [sic] get 15 percent, and regions get five percent…local governments are forbidden to keep their

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[40] Robert B. Charlick, "Popular Participation and Local Governmental Reform," *Public Administration and Development* 21 (2001): 151; "Briefing:  War and Peace- Mali Repeats the Cycle," IRIN, last updated March 29, 2012, http://www.irinnews.org/Report/95186/Briefing-War-and-peace-Mali-repeats-the-cycle; Keita, *Conflict and Conflict Resolution in the Sahel*, 17; Robert Pringle, "Mali's Unlikely Democracy," *The Wilson Quarterly* 30, no. 2 (2006), 32, 34.

[41] "Mali Kidal Region created; price of gas reduced," BBC Monitoring Service, last updated May 16, 1991; Hamidou Magassa and Stefan Meyer, "The Impact of Aid Policies on Domestic Democratisation Processes:  The Case of Mali," *Donor Harmonisation:  Between Effectiveness and Democratisation, Case Study IV* (2008): 16.

[42] Seely, "A political analysis of decentralization*,"* 499–500; Charlick, "Popular Participation and Local Government Reform," 151; Pringle, "Mali's Unlikely Democracy," 35.

own money but must give it back to the central treasury and then rely on central government accounting agents and disbursements"[43] effectively removing the financial management aspect from the hands of the commune leaders. Reports describe how the development taxes merely cover the day-to-day operations of the local governments, and that any additional projects will push the communes over budget. A report from USAID summarized the situation by stating:

> Mali clearly undertook a meaningful political decentralization process by establishing the elected sub-national governments (collectivités décentralisées or collectivités locales), but beyond the formal fact of political decentralization, the achievements are much less clear. Fiscal decentralization has lagged (as responsibilities have been transferred without accompanying resources) and administrative decentralization retains a significant role for the state's exercise of its "supervisory capacity."[44]

Overall, by the early 2000s, Mali formally decentralized governance, but relied heavily on donor countries and NGOs to implement the changes established in the *Pacte National*.[45] Poor financial practices are not uncommon in the region, however, the lack of

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[43] Robert Pringle, "Democratization in Mali:  Putting History to Work," *United States Institute of Peace Peaceworks* No. 58 (2006):  43–44.

[44] Chéibane Coulibaly, J. Tyler Dickovick, and James T. Thomson, "Comparative Assessment of Decentralization in Africa:  Mali In-Country Assessment Report," USAID (2010), 3.

[45] Freedom in the World 2002:  Mali, Freedom House, last accessed August 29, 2012, http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2002/mali; Freedom in the World 2005:  Mali, Freedom House, last accessed August 29, 2012, http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2005/mali; Karl DeRoen Jr., Mark J. Ferguson, Samuel Norton, Young Hwan Park, Jenna Lea & Ashley Streat-Bartlett, "Civil war peace agreement implementation and state capacity," *The Journal of Peace Research* 47(3) (2010): 341; Kelsey Jones-Casey, Ailey Kaiser Hughs, and Anna Knox, "Lesson 2: The Challenge of Decentralization in Mali," *Focus on Land in Africa Brief*, Landesa World Resources Institute (2011):  4.

monetary support to the local governments dampens the effects of the efforts to decentralize, as will be indicated in assessments by financial institutions later in this study.[46]

The 2006 rebel leaders listed the slow implementation of decentralization in Mali as one of their reasons for reneging on their end of the peace treaties and returning to violence. In the negotiations to end that rebellion, the government committed itself to strengthening the decentralization process in already in place. They convinced the rebels that more could be done to implement the promises of the *Pacte National*; that somehow the government would focus more funding to the local level to assist in their operations. The situation remained unchanged for the most part, as the government had decentralized as far as it would prior to the 2012 rebellion with the earlier creation of the 703 communes.[47]

In 2003 the World Bank determined Mali's level of decentralization to be 1.75 out of 4.0 due to the lack of central government support to the new community governments. Using similar criteria, the German bank Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW) in 2011 gave Mali a score of 3.0 out of 4.0 for political decentralization, a 2.75 for administrative decentralization, and above 3.0 scores for the areas of stability and local accountability. The only low score was a 2.0 for accountability and support at the central government level.[48] On the eve of the 2012 rebellion, Mali's decentralization efforts succeeded in

[46] Elisabeth Molteberg, "Linking Relief and Long-Term Development Activities in NGO Projects of the SSE Programme in Mali, Eritrea and Ethiopia," *The SSE Program* (1997): 33–34; Keita, *Conflict and Conflict Resolution in the Sahel*, 24–25. Keita lists the following as providers of donor assistance to reconstruction and infrastructure improvement: Algeria, Belgium, Canada, the European Union (EU), France, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Germany, the United States (U.S.), the African Development Bank, the Islamic Development Bank, and various United Nations agencies; Freedom in the World 2005: Mali; Baz Lecocq and Nadia Belalimat, "Mali: The Tuareg - Between Armed Uprising and Drought" AllAfrica, February 28 2012, http://allafrica.com/stories/201202281157.html; Charlick, "Popular Participation and Local Government Reform," 152; Molteberg, "Linking Relief and Long-Term Development Activities," 33–34; Ole Martin Gaasholt, "State Decentralization and Local Politics in Mali," *Cadernos de Estudos Africanos,* 5/6 (2003): 83–84.

[47] "Mali: Government Strikes New Peace Deal With Tuareg Rebels," IRIN, last updated July 5, 2006, http://www.irinnews.org/Report/59566/MALI-Government-strikes-new-peace-deal-with-Tuareg-rebels.

[48] Klaus Veigel, "Constructing Indicators to Measure and Monitor Decentralization in Sub-Saharan Africa," Annual Meeting of the Informal Development Partners Working Group on Decentralisation and Local Governance (DPWG-LGD) (2011): 6–7.

establishing the promised community level organizations. The only major challenges were in financing these institutions. The question then becomes: did Niger decentralize to a similar level?

## B.    NIGER

Niger implemented a decentralization plan similar to Mali in the decade after 1995. Military coups d'état in 1996 and again in 1999 delayed progress on the devolution of authority to local levels because the international aid required to implement the decentralization plan was either suspended by the donor countries or held up by the disruptions in the central government. True decentralization in Niger did not begin until 2004. The National Assembly originally started deliberations on a decentralization bill in 1998, but it was not passed until 2002 due to the government upheaval surrounding the violent removal of President Mainassara. However, newly elected President Tandja was sworn in by the end of the year, and during his inaugural address he vowed to continue to implement the Ouagadougou Accords and to give a new impulse to decentralization.[49] The bill created 265 new communes to inherit the decentralized administrative authority. Niger finally held nationwide local elections in 2004. The 3700 newly-elected mayors and councilors were charged with creating a local infrastructure development plan, livestock management and assistance, collecting taxes, and coordinating with NGOs. As in Mali, local communities inherited responsibilities without funding, and thus relied on international aid and NGOs to provide assistance. The central government provided grants to cover the salaries and initial operating costs of the communes, and donor

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[49] "President Mamadou delivers inaugural speech." BBC Summary of World Broadcasts. last accessed November 17, 2012, www.lexisnexis.com/hottopics/lnacademic.

assistance picked up from there. Also like Mali, a major factor in Niger's failure to adequately resource its decentralized governmental institutions was lack of state capability. [50]

As in Mali, leaders of the 2007–2009 uprising listed the slow pace of decentralization as one of their main reasons for launching another rebellion. In their eyes, the government failed to deliver on its earlier promises. The MNJ's first statements to the public after launching attacks on Nigerien army positions in May 2007 referred to political neglect and a lack of jobs, schools, and drinking water, all of which were now the (unfunded) responsibility of the local level governments. Rebel leaders only signed another truce with the government in 2009 after President Tandja promised a renewed emphasis on decentralization. Like Mali, however, once the central government completed the structural changes by creating hundreds of new municipalities earlier in the decade, it had decentralized as far as it would prior to the 2011 collapse of Libya.[51]

The World Bank gave Niger a score of 1.0 out of 4 in 2003, describing the situation as "nominal to no decentralization,"[52] due to the lack of funding to local government. The score is also lower than Mali's, indicating that Niger established less

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[50] Freedom in the World 2006: Niger, Freedom House, last accessed August 29, 2012, http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2006/niger; Thea Hilhorst and Irene Guijt, "Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation: A Process to Support Governance and Empowerment at the Local Level," *Koninklijk Instituut Voor de Tropen (Royal Tropical Institute)*(2006), 25; "Tuareg Ex-Combatants to Get Promised Assistance a Decade After Peace Accord" UN Integrated Regional Information Networks, Africa News, last updated October 14, 2005; Norris, "Mali-Niger: Fragile Stability," 13; Carlo Koos and Matthias Basedau, "Does Uranium Mining Increase Civil Conflict Risk? Evidence from a Spatiotemporal Analysis of Africa from 1945 to 2010," *GIGA Research Programme Working Papers: Violence and Security* No. 205 (2012): 22; Peace Accords Matrix: Agreement Between the Republic of Niger and the ORA; "Niger; U.S. Commends Niger On Recent Elections." Africa News, last accessed November 17, 2012, www.lexisnexis.com/hottopics/lnacademic; Matovu, "Issues Related to Developing Requisite Capacities," 5; John Uniack Davis, "Niger Gets Back on Track," *Journal of Democracy* 12, No. 3 (2001): 80–87; "Niger: Country Receives $50 Million for Reforms in the Rural And Social Sectors," AllAfrica News, last updated June 13, 2006, http://allafrica.com/stories/200606140002.html.

[51] "'New rebel' group emerges in Niger," BBC Monitoring Africa - Political Supplied by BBC Worldwide Monitoring, last updated May 18, 2007 www.lexisnexis.com/hottopics/lnacademic; "Niger: Northern rebels reportedly agree to lay down arms ''unconditionally','" BBC Monitoring Africa - Political Supplied by BBC Worldwide Monitoring, last updated April 12, 2009, www.lexisnexis.com/hottopics/lnacademic.

[52] Ndegwa, "Decentralization in Africa," 12.

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representational bodies for its population at the local level. However, Niger held elections for its new municipal councils in 2004 and established the High Commission for Administrative Reform and Decentralisation (HCRAD) in 2005 to monitor decentralization. As a result, the 2011 KfW study gives Niger a political decentralization score of 2.8 out of 4.0, an administrative score of 2.25, and fiscal decentralization score of 1.67, only slightly lower than Mali. Thus, the level of decentralization cannot explain the divergent outcomes of 2012 because it was essentially the same.[53]

## C.     CONCLUSION

In both Mali and Niger, decentralization occurred to comparable levels by the end of 2011 and the return of Tuareg fighters to both countries from Libya. Both countries created local government institutions and elected representatives to them. Both countries also transferred the responsibilities of managing health care, education, water and land management, and tourism to these communal bodies. Finally, both promised to decentralize government revenue but instead turned to international donors for funding local government. Regardless of Mali's creation of more village-level elements, the financial constraints in both countries limited the effects of decentralization. The differences that do exist in the level of decentralization between Mali and Niger are not great enough to have an effect on the events of 2012.

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[53] Jean Bonnal, "Republic of Niger," Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, last accessed November 16, 2012, http://www.ciesin.org/decentralization/English/CaseStudies/niger_e.html; Ndegwa, "Decentralization in Africa, 2 - 12;" Abdoulaye Mohamadou, "Decentralization and local power in Niger," *Institute for International Economic Development Issue Paper* no. 150 (2009): 1,7; Veigel, "Constructing Indicators to Measure and Monitor Decentralization in Sub-Saharan Africa," 6–7;

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# III. COUNTERINSURGENCY STRATEGY AND CONFLICT RECURRENCE

This chapter focuses on the counterinsurgency strategies employed by both Mali and Niger in the 1990–1995 and 2006–2007 rebellions to determine if their strategies varied significantly, and if this variation can explain the events of 2012. The first part of the chapter finds that Malian policy was consistently to negotiate early, and that Nigerien policy was to fight first and negotiate as a last resort. The second part of the chapter looks for indications that this affected the calculations of armed Tuareg fleeing into both countries from Libya in 2012.

## A. MALIAN COUNTERINSURGENCY

The government adopted a strategy of negotiations with the rebels early in the 1990 uprising after a brief period of armed confrontations. The rebellion, launched in June 1990, was followed by government negotiations within months to set the stage for a peace agreement.[54]  President Traoré signed the Tamanrasset Accord in 1991 with the MPA and FIAA less than a year after the onset of insurgency, committing to an immediate ceasefire. The *Pacte National* of 1992 also provided for a withdrawal of the majority of the Malian armed forces from the north and the establishment of a decentralized security program with the delegation of law enforcement control to the local and regional governments.[55]  The only parts of the agreement that actually took place in relation to security were the withdrawal of the Malian army from the region to fewer and fewer posts in the cities of Kidal, Menaka, and Gao, and a small amount of Tuareg integration into the military. Fighting continued, however, for several years. Negotiations secured peace agreements with certain elements within the rebels, while separate and often nameless splinter groups continued to establish domains in northern

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[54] "Mali:  A timeline of northern conflict," IRIN Africa, last accessed May 29, 2012, http://www.irinnews.org/report/95252/mali-a-timeline-of-northern-conflict; Keita, "Conflict and Conflict Resolution in the Sahel," 111–112.

[55] Pacte National, University of Notre Dame, Peace Accords Matrix, last viewed August 29, 2012, https://peaceaccords.nd.edu/site_media/media/accords/Mali_Peace_Accord-proof.pdf.

Mali, gaining territory by taking advantage of the government's reluctance to fight and attacking other Tuareg rebels and the occasional Malian army patrol that would venture outside of their garrisons. The government established that it would continue to negotiate with any groups that were not satisfied with the peace agreements.[56]

In the 2006 rebellion, President Amadou Toumani Touré (otherwise known as ATT) sought a diplomatic settlement with the insurgents. His first response was to avoid any bellicose rhetoric and attempt to prevent any reprisals against non-rebel Tuareg. He told reporters in 2006: "I am a soldier of peace. My role is not to pour oil on the fire…Mali must give a good example in its management of this crisis"[57] and that "[those] who today attacked the military base in Kidal must not be mistaken with our other Tamashek and other compatriots who live with us with our same problems, who have chosen Mali, who have chosen loyalty, and who have the same rights as us."[58] The Malian government continued a soft approach to the conflict and sought out moderate Tuareg leaders, (many of whom were disgusted by some of the rebel factions' indiscriminate use of violence) for attempts at mediation. Barely two months after the first attacks on the army barracks in Kidal, Menaka, and Tessalit, ATT announced the launch of an economic development program for northern Mali valued at approximately $21 million and supported by the European Union.[59]

The government organized a peace summit in Algiers that same year, resulting in the Algiers Accord, where it continued to make more concessions to the rebels showing that it would rather give things to them than fight, actually encouraging more Tuareg

56 Abdalla, *Understanding of the Natural Resource Conflict Dynamics*, 3–6; Lecocq, *Disputed Desert*, 310, 331, 353–355; University of Notre Dame, Peace Accords Matrix: Pacte National, Paragraphs 9A, 9B, and 15C.

57 "MALI: Government strikes new peace deal with Tuareg rebels," IRIN, last accessed October 30, 2012, http://www.irinnews.org/Report/59566/MALI-Government-strikes-new-peace-deal-with-Tuareg-rebels.

58 "MALI: Armed men seize three military basis in remote north," IRIN, last accessed October 30, 2012, http://www.irinnews.org/Report/59096/MALI-Armed-men-seize-three-military-bases-in-remote-north.

59 "MALI: Government launches big development scheme in rebel areas," IRIN, last accessed October 30, 2012, http://www.irinnews.org/Report/59796/MALI-Government-launches-big-development-scheme-in-rebel-areas.

demands. This included more local empowerment (further decentralization) and economic development (refocusing foreign aid, improvements to roads, water systems, and other infrastructure), social and cultural development of the northern region of Kidal as well as for the integration of the Tuareg rebels into the Malian army, just like in the *Pacte National*. Moreover, the Algiers Accord included even further withdrawal of the Malian army from the north.[60] There is no available information on the internal thought process of the rebel groups, however, the consistent government compromise to Tuareg demands following violence surely did nothing to make rebellion less attractive. While attempting to assuage Tuareg grievances, this conciliatory approach gave the Tuareg leadership the impression that Touré would rather give in to their demands than fight.[61]

Bahanga's breakaway group the ATNMC continued to attack, demanding more from the government. Mali sustained attempts for a negotiated resolution to the conflict by conducting another round of peace talks in 2009, this time involving the ATNMC and moderated by the African Union (AU) president at the time, Muammar Qaddafi, in Libya. This continued the tradition of avoiding violence, making concessions, and unintentionally creating an environment that would be advantageous to the future return of rebels in 2012. The government of Mali continued to offer to the Tuareg insurgents more local empowerment, economic development, and further integration into the armed forces, including the formation of an antiterrorism unit made up of former combatants and again, a general scaling-back of government security forces in northern Mali.[62] The demilitarization once more confined government troops to bases in Timbuktu, Gao, and

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[60] "Les accords d'Alger du 4 juillet 2006," Temoust, last updated May 21, 2009, http://www.temoust.org/les-accords-d-alger-du-4-juillet,10612; "Accord d'Alger: Une remise en cause selon un journal malien," Algeria watch: informations sur la situation des droits humain en Algérie, last updated March 3, 2010, http://www.algeria-watch.org/fr/article/pol/geopolitique/remise_cause.htm.

[61] Annette Lohman, "Who Owns the Sahara? Old Conflicts, New Menaces: Mali and the Central Sahara between the Tuareg, Al Qaida and Organized Crime," *Peace and Security Series,* Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (2011): 7; Lecocq, *Disputed Desert,* 396.

[62] "Mali Tuareg rebels in peace pact," BBC, last updated April 4, 2008, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7330096.stm; Jaime Bleck, "Countries at the Crossroads 2011: Mali," in *Countries at the Crossroads 2011: An Analysis of Democratic Governance,* ed. Jake Dizard, Christopher Walker, and Vanessa Tucker (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012): 390; Emerson, "Desert Insurgency," 673–674.

Kidal.[63] Many residing in Bamako were critical of the President's willingness to negotiate. An editorial in Mali's national daily newspaper The Independent voiced widespread public discontent with the government counterinsurgency strategy of avoiding fighting and conducting negotiations when it said "[t]hese measures will encourage every region of Mali to organize their own rebellion."[64] Negotiation did not lead to rebellion across the country, but it did set the stage for the next revolt in 2012.[65]

## B.  NIGERIEN COUNTERINSURGENCY

The Nigerien government attempted to crush the 1990s rebellion militarily undertaking negotiations only after several years of military operations failed to bring it to heel. Thus, Niger's brutal counterinsurgency campaign continued for years after Mali initiated negotiations with its rebels. Niger demonstrated its intent to ruthlessly put down the revolt; at the first sign of unrest among the Tuareg population, the military conducted a major operation in which approximately 400 Tuareg were reportedly rounded-up and executed in the town of Tchin Tabaraden. When media organizations made this information public, the government held a hasty investigation and detained several army officers, who were subsequently released under pressure from the military.[66] In 1992, as Mali was finalizing the details of the *Pacte National*, Niger decreed "a security

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[63] Tuareg-Mali, 2006–2009, GlobalSecurity.org, last accessed October 30, 2012, http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/tuareg-mali-2006.htm.

[64] "Mali:  Government strikes new peace deal with Tuareg rebels," IRIN, last accessed October 30, 2012, http://www.irinnews.org/Report/59566/MALI-Government-strikes-new-peace-deal-with-Tuareg-rebels.

[65] "Mali:  Avoiding Escalation," *International Crisis Group Africa Report No. 189,* July 18, (2012): 2–4. Jeremy Keenan, "Uranium Goes Critical in Niger:  Tuareg Rebellions Threaten Sahelian Conflagration," *Review of African Political Economy* No. 117 (2008):  464; Lecocq, *Disputed Desert*, 396–398; Emerson "Desert Insurgency," 673, 676;  Abdalla, *Understanding of the Natural Resource Conflict Dynamics* 9; "Mali ex-rebels to tackle al-Qaeda," BBC, last updated July 20, 2009, http://news.bbc.co.uk//2/hi/africa/8159175.stm; Tuareg-Mali, 2006–2009, GlobalSecurity.org; "MALI: Government strikes new peace deal with Tuareg rebels," IRIN, last accessed October 30, 2012, http://www.irinnews.org/Report/59566/MALI-Government-strikes-new-peace-deal-with-Tuareg-rebels; Ricardo René Larémont, "Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb:  Terrorism and Counterterrorism," *African Security* 4 (2011) 259.

[66] Hsain Ilahiane, *Historical Dictionary of the Berbers,* Maryland:  Scarecrow Press, 2006, 137–138; Jibrin Ibrahim, "Political Exclusion," 35–39.

precaution zone"[67] in the Tuareg homelands, listing state security as a reason to broaden the authority of the military forces in the region. After four years of an exclusively military response, the government brokered a peace agreement with the various rebel groups. Cracks were beginning to show in the state security apparatus, with numerous mutinies in the army over unpaid salaries. Financially drained, the government saw no other choice but to negotiate.[68]

This did not constitute a shift in strategy, however. When insurgency returned in 2007, the government again employed a strictly military response. Referring to the rebels as bandits and drug traffickers, President Tandja refused any negotiation whatsoever until the rebels lay down their arms. Tandja justified his refusal to negotiate by claiming that the government had implemented the 1995 Ouagadougou Accords fully, and thus there was no legitimate reason for a rebellion. He redirected $60 million to support military operations and deployed 4000 troops into the northern region in July 2007. The *Economist* reported on September 13, 2007 that the "entire north has been turned into a battle zone, with army checkpoints and both sides laying landmines…"[69] The governor of Agadez province, Abba Boukar, restricted travel to military convoys only in the areas affected by the rebellion and imposed a curfew in the regional capital. On August 24

[67] "Niger Human Rights Practices, 1992: ." *Department of State Dispatch.* Date Accessed: 2012/11/04. www.lexisnexis.com/hottopics/lnacademic.

[68] "Niger: Impunity enshrined in the constitution, 1999," Amnesty International, last accessed November 15, 2012, http://www.amnesty.org/es/library/asset/AFR43/007/1999/es/22f1e5d7-e040–11dd-b049-c56b318da40f/afr430071999en.pdf; "NIGER Human Rights Practices, 1992: ." *Department of State Dispatch,* last accessed November 21, 2012, http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/publisher,USDOS,,NER,3ae6aa2516,0.html; "Soldiers mutiny in Niger in protest over wages." *Agence France Presse – English*, last accessed November 4, 2012; "Niger army says Tuareg rebellion should be taken more seriously." *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts,* last accessed November 4, 2012; "Niger: Lull in conflict favours return in the north," International Displacement Monitoring Centre, Norwegian Refugee Council, last updated September 8, 2009, http://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/niger; Ilahiane, *Historical Dictionary of the Berbers*, 137–138; Peace Accords Matrix: Agreement Between the Republic of Niger and the ORA, University of Notre Dame Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, last viewed September 20, 2012, https://peaceaccords.nd.edu/matrix/accord/49; Krings, "Marginalization and Revolt among the Tuareg in Mali and Niger," 62. The groups covered under the CRA umbrella include the Front de Liberation de l'Air et de l'Azawad (FLAA), the Front de Liberation Tamoust (FLT), the Armée Revolutionaire de la Liberation du Nord Niger (ARLNN), and the Front Patriotique de libération du Sahara).

[69] "International: A radioactive rebellion; Niger," *The Economist*, last updated September 13, 2007, http://www.economist.com/node/9804417.

President Tandja declared a state of emergency for the entire region of Agadez. This allowed the government to make dozens of detentions and arrests as well as evict the press from the region (for the duration of the counterinsurgency), blacking out any reports of escalating violence. He also claimed that the MNJ was laying landmines in Niamey, calling for to form "peoples' brigades"[70] to find and denounce those suspected of conducting actions against the government. In a lesson to future rebels, the army forcefully relocated about 4000 people from a city they considered to be a center of gravity for the insurgents, Iferouane. This moved 80% of its population to areas south of Agadez to deny the rebels safe haven and support. This military strategy continued for two years, with heavy losses on both sides.[71]

The government included severe restrictions against the media as a part of its counterinsurgency strategy, providing another indication that the regime was only interested in crushing the rebellion, no matter what the cost. This is in contrast to Mali, where the free press continued to flourish in spite of the rebellion. Niger's freedom of the press status according to Freedom House was degraded from "Partly Free" to "Not Free" due to the government's eviction of reporters from the conflict zone, and the suspension of several media outlets that attempted to cover the conflict.[72]   The government also banned the broadcasting of Radio France International due to the accusation that the radio station was biased towards the MNJ cause. Journalists, foreign and domestic, were

[70] Boureima Hama, "Landmines spread fear in Niger towns," ReliefWeb / Agence France-Presse, last updated January 11, 2008, http://reliefweb.int/report/niger/landmines-spread-fear-niger-towns.

[71] "Mali-Niger:  Insecurity persists despite militia leader's arrest,"  IRIN, last accessed October 30, 2012, http://www.irinnews.org/Report/80660/MALI-NIGER-Insecurity-persists-despite-militia-leader-s-arrest; Tristan McConnell, "Tuareg nomads set to intensify rebellion in Niger," *Christian Science Monitor*, October 2007, 12; "Niger Sending Troops Toward Rebel Area," *Agence France-Presse*, *New York Times*, July 1, 2007, sec. A.11; Lydia Polgreen, "Battle Unfolds in a Poor Land for the Riches Beneath the Soil," *New York Times*, December 15, 2008, sec. A.1; Emerson, "Desert Insurgency," 669, 676; Keenan, "Uranium Goes Critical in Niger," 464; Abdalla, *Understanding of the Natural Resource Conflict Dynamics* 7,9; Jane's World Armies:  Niger, last updated April 23, 2012, https://janes.ihs.com.libproxy.nps.edu/CustomPages/Janes/DisplayPage.aspx?DocType=Reference&ItemId=+++1319280; Roger Suso, "Territorial Autonomy and Self-Determination Conflicts:  Opportunity and Willingness Cases from Bolivia, Niger, and Thailand," *Institut Catala Internacional Working Papers* (2010), 35–36; Keenan, "Uranium Goes Critical in Niger," 450–451.

[72] "Freedom of the Press 2008:  Niger,"  Freedom House, last accessed November 11, 2012, http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2008/niger.

threatened with arrest and prosecution for merely covering the conflict, no matter how impartial. Many correspondents were jailed for publishing reports on the government's handling of the insurgency. Tadja's media blackout would last throughout the counterinsurgency, preventing an international audience from observing his military operations against the Tuareg rebels.[73]

Tanja reluctantly entered negotiations with the rebels after this scorched earth policy resulted in a military stalemate. Most rebel fighters agreed to join the peace negotiations in recognition of this military stalemate. As in the previous decades, only after a military solution had failed did Niger undertake negotiations, ultimately offering concessions similar to the ones Mali had negotiated years earlier.[74]

## C.    STRATEGIC DECISIONS OF REBEL LEADERS IN 2012

Consistent with past action against security threats in Mali, the government chose not to confront the possibility of another rebel uprising following the collapse of Muammar Qaddafi's government in 2011. Little was done to intercept and screen the flow of refugees from Libya for weapons and military equipment. This would be a difficult task regardless of the government's intent due to the porous nature of the borders, but no attempt was made to seize incoming weapons, despite warnings from several government officials in the region. This would contrast greatly with Niger, showing almost an indifferent attitude from the government of Mali in even attempting to prevent a rebellion militarily. The two countries had similar levels of competence and

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[73] "2009 Niger Human Rights Report," Emassy of the United States, Niamey, Niger, last accessed November 11, 2012, http://niamey.usembassy.gov/2009_nigerhrr.html; "Niger:  Amnesty International submission to the UN Universal Periodic Review," UPR Working Group, January 2011, last accessed November 11, 2012, http://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session10/NE/AI_AmnestyInternational_eng.pdf.

[74] Yvan Guichaoua, "Circumstantial Alliances and Loose Loyalties in Rebellion Making:  The Case of Tuareg Insurgency in Northern Niger (2007–2009), *MICROCON Research Working Paper* 20 (2009), 4; Annika Aberg, "North-Mali and North-Niger, Libya Engagement," *Unpacking the Mystery of Mediation in African Peace Processes*, Center for Security Studies (CSS), Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (2008), 58; "Niger/Mali politics:  Security threat,"  EIU ViewsWire, May 9, 2012.

equipment within the armed forces at the time, but employed them differently in the face of another Tuareg rebel threat.[75]

The general population in southern Mali recognized the recurring government strategy of negotiations with rebels and voiced opposition. After the attacks against garrisoned Malian troops began in January 2012, President Touré called for general calm in a televised address and directed Malians to avoid confusing the insurgents with the rest of the Tuareg population as he had done in 2006. "Those who attacked military barracks and other locations in the north must not be conflated with our other compatriots – Tuareg, Arab, Songhai, Peul – who live with us."[76] The National Assembly called for a forum for peace and reconciliation with the Tuareg rebel leaders within a couple of weeks of the initiation of hostilities. Thousands violently protested the government's soft approach to the conflict, assembling in Bamako.[77] ATT met with disgruntled spouses of soldiers, who condemned the "softness of government toward the Tuareg offensive."[78] Even after the MNLA and associated Islamist groups conducted several successful attacks in January 2012, the government repeated its commitment to dialogue and negotiated settlement. These attacks included the summary execution of at least 70 soldiers and civilians in the town of Aguelhok on January 14. The decision of several junior officers to depose ATT through a coup d'état sealed the fate of northern Mali by disrupting the unity of command from the President to the ground commanders and prompting the United States and France to suspend security assistance programs. Ironically, the coup leaders, whose justification was that ATT was too soft on the

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[75] Roland Marchal, "the Coup in Mali: the result of a long-term crisis or spillover from the Libyan civil war?" *Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Center* (2012), 2–3, 6; Zoubir, "Qaddafi's Spawn."

[76] Soumaila T. Diarra, "Mali: Thousands Flee as Tuareg Rebellion Spreads in North." *Global Information Network*, last updated February 10, 2012, http://www.ipsnews.net/2012/02/mali-fifty-thousand-flee-as-political-parties-call-for-dialogue/.

[77] "Violence in northern Mali causing a human rights crisis," Amnesty International, last updated February 16, 2012, http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/violence-northern-mali-causing-human-rights-crisis-2012–02–16.

[78] Serge Daniel, "Mali seeks to cool anger over Tuareg rebellion," Agence France Presse (AFP), last updated February 3, 2012, http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5hnpkylQa4_jlPOKwZlFFv4SuvRsw?docId=CNG.509c6be00a165aa5f8d8dd1384c905e8.181.

insurgency, called for peace talks with the rebels soon after taking power and prior to the MNLA declaration of independence on April 6.[79]

While there have been no indications that Tuareg rebels planned on launching a rebellion in Niger, the governments pre-emptive actions showed that they would continue the tradition of military responses to threats. Niger's military confronted the hundreds of thousands of Tuareg fleeing Libya, among them former fighters from his army destined for both Niger and Mali. President Issoufou appears to have carried on the strategies of a strong response to threats; furthermore, coupled with the knowledge of historical responses from the government and military, any potential rebel groups entering Niger could reasonably assume they were in for a fight. Issoufou acted decisively by ensuring that his security forces check returning refugees for weapons and other military hardware that could be used in a rebellion.[80] The military increased patrols in the north, disarming ex-fighters discovered entering the country from Libya (with the support of U.S. unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) as a part of the Trans-Saharan Counter Terrorism Partnership).[81] As early as August 2011, the military seized approximately 60 vehicles and a dismantled helicopter smuggled out of Libya, influencing the security forces to begin conducting their own aerial patrols along the northern border.[82] There were also several incidents of the Nigerien army clashing with heavily armed Tuareg entering the country after the fall of Qaddafi. In one instance the military ambushed a convoy of

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[79] Lieutenant Colonel Oumar Diarra, Malian Army, "Insecurity and Instability in the Sahel Region: The Case of Mali," United States Army War College, Strategy Research Project, International Fellow, 2012, 13; Alexis Arieff and Kelly Johnson, "Crisis in Mali," Congressional Research Service (CRS), August 16, 2012, 1–10, 14; Daniel, "Mali seeks to cool anger over Tuareg rebellion; Diarra, "Mali: Thousands Flee as Tuareg Rebellion Spreads in North;" Gregory Mann, "The Mess in Mali: How the war on terror ruined a success story in West Africa," Foreign Policy, last updated April 5, 2012, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/04/05/the_mess_in_mali.

[80] Roland Marchal, "the Coup in Mali: the result of a long-term crisis or spillover from the Libyan civil war?" *Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Center* (2012), 6–7; "Tuareg uprising in Mali threatens neighbour Niger," Africa Times News, last updated May 3, 2012, http://www.africa-times-news.com/2012/05/tuareg-uprising-in-mali-threatens-neighbour-niger/.

[81] "Tuareg rebels make troubled return from Libya to Mali," BBC News Africa, last updated February 29, 2012, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-17192212.

[82] "Niger launches air surveillance on Libyan border," Reuters, last updated August 22, 2011, http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/08/22/niger-libya-surveillance-idAFL5E7JL0I720110822.

heavily armed vehicles entering Niger from Libya, killing 13 and taking 13 prisoners. The army seized 36 assault rifles, 11 machine guns, three rockets and 11,000 rounds of ammunition, not to mention the 4x4 vehicles carrying them.[83] There have also been several instances of groups of Tuareg fighters surrendering to authorities upon return to Niger, with several dozen turning themselves in to police in April 2011. The Nigerien security forces continued to intercept Tuareg entering Niger as the fighting raged in northern Mali, to include capturing a former MNJ leader, Aghali Alambo, who had been a close aid to Qaddafi after fleeing Niger in 2009. Although his intent was unknown, Alambo was stopped in Niger with an undisclosed amount of explosives and weapons in March of 2012.[84]

## D. CONCLUSION

This chapter has established that Mali has consistently negotiated with rebels, taking only defensive military action to prevent the conflict from spreading south. Both President Konaré and Touré were convinced that giving in to the rebels' demands would be easier than fighting. Their actions signaled to later rebels that Mali was a soft target, a

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[83] "14 Killed in Niger Clash with Convoy from Libya; the Army takes 13 Prisoners and Seizes Weapons After the Weekend Fighting," Los Angeles Times, last updated November 10, 2011, http://search.proquest.com/docview/902792779?accountid=12702; Marc-Andre Boivert, "Mali, Niger: Tuareg Voices Barely Heard Over the Sounds of War" Global Voices, last updated November 26, 2011, http://globalvoicesonline.org/2011/11/26/mali-niger-tuareg-voices-barely-heard-over-the-sounds-of-war/.

[84] "OCHA in 2012 & 2013: Niger," United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), last accessed November 11, 2012, http://www.unocha.org/ocha2012–13/niger; "Mali soldiers seize presidential palace in coup," The Times, last updated March 22, 2012; "Country Profile 2012: Niger," The Africa Report, last updated September 13, 2012, http://www.theafricareport.com/20120913501818520/west/country-profile-2012-niger.html; "Hundreds of returning Tuaregs alarm Mali, Niger," AFP, last updated August 29, 2011, http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5jOxPyZiQuQma3iET_HNy8ipehmiw?docId=CNG.5ff3f4fb659e435824af983bc4f58339.b1; Scott Stearns, "Tuareg Leaders in Niger and Mali Urge Tuareg in Libya to Work With NTC," Voice of America, last updated September 4, 2011, http://www.voanews.com/content/tuareg-leaders-in-niger-and-mali-urge-tuareg-in-libya-to-work-with-ntc-129253488/144792.html; "Libyan Convoy in Niger Where Gadhafi Has Tuareg Ties," Voice of America, last updated September 5, 2011, http://www.voanews.com/content/libyan-convoy-in-niger-where-gadhafi-has-tuareg-ties-129318313/144865.html; Nathalie Prevost, "Analysis: Tuareg uprising in Mali threatens neighbor Niger," Reuters, last updated May 3, 2012, http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/05/03/us-niger-tuareg-idUSBRE8420AM20120503; "Mali: Tuareg Rebellion," AllAfrica, last updated February 22, 2012, http://allafrica.com/stories/201202221166.html; Jeremy Keenan, "Mali's Tuareg rebellion: What next?" AlJazeera, last updated March 20, 2012, http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2012/03/20123208133276463.html.

message that was reinforced as Touré offered reconciliation as soon as the 2012 rebellion began. In contrast, Niger has consistently pursued the military options first, only negotiating in the face of military stalemate. This signaled to later rebels that they could not expect quick or easy gains in Niger. This message was also reinforced as Issoufou responded proactively and militarily to the expulsion of armed Tuareg from Libya in 2011. Since the success of the rebels in Mali, he has been the leading advocate of a military solution to the Mali crisis by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). He directed his security forces to screen the returning Tuareg for weapons and military equipment. At the same time, the Issofou Administration called for the other West African heads of state to recognize the security problems caused by the collapse of Libya, and campaigned for a regional solution to the crisis. The difference in historical counterinsurgency strategies between Mali and Niger are stark, and contributed to rebels' calculations as they were forced from Libya in late 2011.

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# IV. CONCLUSION

This thesis tested two hypotheses. The first was that variations in governmental decentralization, resulting from earlier peace agreements, made one country a more attractive target than the other. Since both Mali and Niger are poor and can provide little for their respective communes, the hypothesis was that more decentralization in one of the countries led to less central government involvement in the areas in question, making it an easier target for a rebel uprising. The evidence examined leads me to reject this hypothesis. While literature on decentralization in general is largely ambivalent with cases made for both its positive and negative effects on conflicts, there is a dearth of information on the decentralization efforts in Niger. With the exception of scoring provided by international financial institutions, the majority of research was conducted prior to Niger's efforts in 2004, falsely concluding that the country would not devolve administrative authority. Combined with Mali's highly publicized decentralization efforts, this gives the impression that Mali was more successful in its efforts; nonetheless, decentralization levels as of 2011 are virtually identical. Both decentralized administrative responsibilities to the local level, creating new regional and local governments. However, neither has significantly decentralized revenue allocations. Donations and support from the international community do not go beyond supporting the daily operations of local governments. Mali has a slightly better decentralization score due to the creation of more governmental subunits, but the difference between the two countries is negligible and cannot explain the events of 2012.

The second hypothesis is that variations in counterinsurgency strategy made Mali appear to be a softer target in 2012 than Niger. The evidence suggests that counterinsurgency strategies in the two countries do indeed differ markedly. Mali's policy of accommodating rebels rather than fighting contrasts greatly with Niger's strategy of punishing insurgents into a military stalemate. This makes Mali the logical choice for a Tuareg rebel group on the run from Libya and looking for a place to establish an area of operations. It could expect that the government would seek negotiations, allowing it to establish a foothold. It could also expect that Niger would fight first and

talk later. While force is not the solution to recurring insurgency, it may be a critical element in deterring future conflict. This does not challenge the findings of the majority of research that suggests that negotiation and reconciliation are the ideal way to prevent conflict recurrence; it complements it. Both measures are required. The government cannot immediately cave in to insurgent attacks and push for negotiations; this rewards the rebels' violent behavior as seen in the case of Mali, leading to conflict recurrence. However, dialogue is necessary to conclude hostilities. Ideally the government would only conduct negotiations from a position of strength, after the insurgents have been defeated militarily.

The conclusions on counterinsurgency strategy and conflict recurrence established in this thesis can contribute to resolving the current situation in Mali and the U.S. policy towards the region. With the international community's increasing interest in poorly governed and even ungoverned spaces like northern Mali, northern Niger, and southern Algeria due to the threat of the consolidation of extremist groups AQIM and their affiliates, the problem of northern Mali requires a military solution. There are several reasons why it is important to extend military power throughout the borders of the country, and as will be discussed later in this conclusion, this will require (at least initially) the participation of other regional security forces. These ungoverned spaces have been utilized as caravan routes since ancient times, and more recently have become the preferred path for smugglers in drugs, weapons, people, and other contraband from South America and Africa into Europe. Focusing on drug trafficking, the shift in demand from North America to Europe, with some studies estimating a 50 percent drop in the United States and Canada versus a doubling or tripling in European demand,[85] has led to a corresponding shift in the transportation methods of the illicit goods. European law enforcement agencies have dramatically increased their surveillance of passengers as well as incoming airfreight coming directly from South America, causing the traffickers to search for alternate routes. The lack of government authority along the ancient trade

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[85] Issaka K. Souare, "A Critical Assessment of Security Challenges in West Africa," *Institute for Security Studies Situation Report* (2010), 8.

routes through countries like Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger provide a cheap medium to move these goods into the markets in Europe.[86]

The trafficking of drugs and other contraband through countries like Mali is not in of itself degrading the security of the region; rather, it is the second- and third-order effects of governmental corruption and the generation of funds for extremist groups that the smuggling contributes to that is damaging. This, therefore, must be addressed with military force as part of a counterinsurgency campaign. The traffickers use bribes to secure free passage through the region, compromising the integrity of security officials who become accustomed to looking the other way and allowing for the freedom of maneuver of non-state actors. This security challenge increases dramatically when the smugglers either align with or become part of the extremist groups in the region. AQIM is known more for criminal activity in West Africa than for Islamic ideology, specializing in kidnapping for ransom as well as involvement in black market trafficking. Ibrahim ag Bahanga's Tuareg rebel groups like the ATNMC have also likely been involved in the drug trade, negotiating with Mali's central government for more autonomy in order to continue smuggling operations.[87]  Furthermore, Mali's tradition of negotiations instead of military force created the situation of lawlessness in the northern region, allowing extremist and criminal organizations to operate with impunity while making a profit. This, in turn, has led to the region becoming a safe haven for Islamic extremists in general, and must be addressed with military force.[88]

Imposing a military counterinsurgency strategy in northern Mali will by no means be an easy task, and will require time and patience for all involved due to the complex nature of the situation. This strategy must take action against the current insurgency as

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[86] *Situation Report:  Cocaine Trafficking in Western Africa,* United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2007), 3, 6; "West Africa:  Trafficking Central Station?" NATO Review, Organized Crime, last accessed December 2, 2012,
http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2009/organized_crime/transnational_trafficking_west_africa/en/index.htm
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[87] Souare, "A Critical Assessment of Security Challenges in West Africa," 10.

[88] "West Africa Drug Trade: New transit hub for cocaine trafficking fuels corruption," Ten stories the world should hear more about (2008), The United Nations, last accessed December 2, 2012, http://www.un.org/en/events/tenstories/08/westafrica.shtml.

well as any future illegal smuggling operations that affect the region. First of all, the Malian army must be reestablished and rebuilt; a large amount of vehicles, weapons, and other equipment was seized by the Tuareg rebels and Islamic extremist groups when the army withdrew and the northern half of Mali collapsed. Besides the weapons and equipment lost on the battlefield, the insurgents captured key weapons depots where the troops were garrisoned in cities like Gao, adding to an already lethal stockpile of weapons carried from Libya the previous year.[89] These armaments and vehicles must be replaced, but countries that have provided military assistance in the past (the United States and France) should look beyond the normal focus of only developing units at the tactical level. Previous assistance has emphasized improving the capabilities of frontline troops at primarily the battalion and company level, and has paid little attention to the structural and institutional framework of the entire army, to include training, logistics, and administration, as well as better integration into a whole-government approach to solving the problem.[90] Once a civilian government is established in Bamako without interference from the March 2012 coup leaders, and the U.S. and France can reassume assistance, efforts should focus on building an organization that can eventually sustain and administer itself, as well as instill the values and ethos common in professional militaries through a structured training system. These are long-term goals will take several years, at a minimum, to make an impact. For more immediate effects, international assistance can help the Malian armed forces by supporting operational intelligence.[91]

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[89] "Exclusive: Tuareg rebels in Mali talk tactics and weaponry," France 24, last updated June 22, 2012, http://observers.france24.com/content/20120622-exclusive-photos-northern-mali-tuareg-rebel-leader-shows-military-arsenal-mnla-ansar-dine-gao-weapons; Serge Daniel, "Al-Qaeda branch seizes key Mali arms depot as crisis deepens," AFP, last updated May 28, 2012, http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5io8bWcHoiaIregdCoIFTCEgwb5tQ?docId=CNG.49cbb747cb51f2b3497840b48c6e0510.301%20.

[90] "U.S. arms Mali to battle al-Qaeda," BBC, last updated October 20, 2009, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/8316269.stm; Operation Enduring Freedom Trans-Sahara (OEF-TS) information page, USAFRICOM, last accessed December 2, 2012, http://www.africom.mil/oef-ts.asp; Alex Arieff and Kelly Johnson, "Crisis in Mali," Congressional Research Service Report for Congress (2012), 15; "Combating Terrorism: Actions Needed to Enhance Implementation of Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership," United States Government Accountability Office, GAO-08–860 (2008), 3, 17–19.

[91] Daniel Finnan, "U.S. Africom ready to consider requests for Mali military support," RFI, last updated November 15, 2012, http://www.english.rfi.fr/node/140463.

Since the Malian army is incapable of conducting offensive operations unilaterally due to the events of the past year, regional forces will be required to defeat the insurgency militarily. The problems faced by Mali span the borders of several countries in the region, to include Niger, Algeria, Burkina Faso, and Mauritania. The Tuareg rebels, Islamic extremists, and illicit traffickers (who, include both rebels and extremists) pay little heed to international borders; moreover, a regional military solution is appropriate. The leadership at ECOWAS is aware of this. Draft plans from the regional community include a 180 day period to assemble and prepare a force of approximately 3300 West African soldiers in addition to the Malian army to secure northern Mali, but no date has been set to accomplish this.[92]  There are several challenges inherent with this plan. First of all, it does not include Algeria, who is not a member of ECOWAS. Algeria possesses one of the most powerful armies in the region, which as been fighting the same types of insurgents for decades. Any real military strategy for the region would require the assistance of Algeria, but the government in Algiers is reluctant to get involved, concerned that it could reignite violence within its own borders. Under diplomatic pressure from France and the U.S., Algeria recently stated that it would not oppose a military intervention, but would not support one, either.[93]  Another obstacle to a military solution is that like most countries in the region, the population is largely hostile to foreign intervention in their homeland, and would be reluctant to support it. Even troops under a UN and ECOWAS mandate would meet hostility from the populace. Protests against an outside intervention have occurred sporadically over the last several months.[94] Solving this lack of popular support requires a delicate information campaign from the government of Mali. All attempts should be made to portray the coalition as being led by the Malian army, with a guaranteed withdrawal of foreign troops once conditions are met.

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[92] Monika Mark, "Mali under pressure to give separatists autonomy in fight against al-Qaida," The Guardian, last updated November 22, 2012, http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/nov/22/mali-separatists-al-qaida.

[93] John Irish and Lamine Chikhi, "Algeria accepts last-resort Mali intervention:  sources,"  Reuters, last updated October 25, 2012, http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/10/25/mali-crisis-algeria-idUSL5E8LPQ7S20121025.

[94] "Analysis:  Intervention options in northern Mali," IRIN, last updated June 21, 2012, http://www.irinnews.org/printreport.aspx?reportid=95698.

Another group that is vehemently opposed to foreign intervention are the Tuareg themselves, and their support is vital to the counterinsurgency and establishment of security in northern Mali. This does not run contrary to the findings of this thesis; the central government can gain the support of the Tuareg rebels without conducting lengthy negotiations and making concessions to them. Securing the assistance of the Tuareg (rebels and the general Tuareg population) will be necessary to establishing security as even a force of the size being proposed will likely only be able to secure the major cities in the region, like Timbuktu, Gao, and Kidal. The region is simply too large to cover with the projected manpower. Gaining the support of the rebels to fight the extremists and secure northern Mali would have been a dubious proposition in the initial months of the insurgency; however, infighting among the various insurgent groups has made this a possibility. The Islamic extremist groups largely marginalized the MNLA as early as June 2012. The marriage of convenience between the MNLA, Ansar Dine, and MUJAO to fight the government forces was never very strong to begin with, as the MNLA sought autonomy, not the imposition of Islamic law like the other groups. The Tuareg separatists were estimated to have lost all of their significant bases to the Islamists in northern Mali by July, and were thereafter in survival mode, looking for an opportunity to strike back.[95] The MNLA's latest attempt to re-establish a foothold in the region reportedly failed when they attempted to attack and secure the northern city of Gao in mid-November. Held by MUJAO, the city was allegedly reinforced by several hundred AQIM fighters prior to the MNLA assault.[96]

The central government in Bamako must capitalize on the MNLA's current situation, enlisting their assistance in securing northern Mali with force. The separatist rebels have shown that they are willing to fight the extremists, and along with the Tuareg

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[95] "Islamists push Tuareg rebels from last N. Mali bastion," AFP, last updated July 11, 2012, http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5jCNyxIduNyvgLaQ_zrXDnM98AmTA?docId=CNG.cb13e62900f19c6230483d92283a1e55.311.

[96] Jemal Oumar and Bakari Gueye, "Terrorists, Touaregs clash in northern Mali," Maghrebia, last updated November 19, 2012, http://magharebia.com/cocoon/awi/xhtml1/en_GB/features/awi/features/2012/11/19/feature-02; "Al Qaeda sends reinforcements to aid Islamists in Mali," France 24, last updated November 17, 2012, http://www.france24.com/en/20121117-al-qaeda-sends-reinforcements-aid-islamists-mali-al-qaeda-aqim-mnla.

Islamic-affiliated group Ansar Dine have indicated that they are willing to discuss a relationship with the Malian government. In line with the findings of this thesis, the government must make it clear that they will accept the assistance of the Tuareg rebels in expelling the Islamist extremist threats from AQIM and MUJAO, but will not conduct negotiations on the future of northern Mali until the objectives of the military actions are complete. Any further violence from the Tuareg rebels will be met with violence. Both ECOWAS and the Malian government have made moves towards this possibility, with Bamako naming four representatives to establish dialogue with the rebels and explore the possibility of an alliance.[97]

The government of Mali must make it clear to the Tuareg rebels that they have to unconditionally support the establishment of security throughout the countries boundaries. Security is vital to the improvement of their own welfare. If a combined effort between international coalition forces, the Malian army, and the Tuareg rid northern Mali of the threat of AQIM-related violence, kidnappings, and other crime, tourism could return (if there are any locations for tourists to return to that have not been destroyed by Islamic extremists), providing much needed revenue to the local population. NGOs that once sustained the local level governments would be free to return as well. Regionally, if bodies like ECOWAS with the aid of northern African countries like Algeria actively engaged the threats that span international borders, like drug, weapons, and human trafficking, extremist groups would no longer have a safe haven in the ungoverned spaces like northern Mali. This is a monumental task that deserves further study, and is out of the scope of this thesis. Overall, though, security must be established through a regional counterinsurgency effort, and any efforts at reconciliation without security will likely lead to conflict recurrence.

This leads to several implications for U.S. policy, most of which are already being implemented by the U.S. government. Washington has acknowledged that military force will be necessary to root out the threats to regional security starting with northern Mali.

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[97] "Mali's Mujao Islamists and rebels in battle for control," BBC, last updated November 16, 2012, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-20369276; Mark, "Mali under pressure to give separatists autonomy in fight against al-Qaida."

The U.S. Secretary of State for African Affairs, Johnnie Carson, has stated publically that a regional military solution is required, including the participation of Algeria and Mauritania, to achieve the desired security end state. However, the U.S. insists that a democratic government be firmly in place in Bamako prior to the initiation of combat operations. Carson stated in October that "it is absolutely, critically important for there to be democratic progress in Mali, that there be a restoration of the civilian, democratic, constitutional government, and that needs to be done as soon as possible."[98]  Beyond a return to the democratic foundations that Mali was once known for before the March 2012 coup, the U.S. insists on a carefully planned operation with clearly stated goals prior to any offensive operations. As mentioned earlier, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton met with Algerian government officials in October in an effort to gain more support in the military efforts, leading to a shift in Algiers position from anti-intervention to at least acquiescence.[99]

While not necessarily affecting the military counterinsurgency strategy required to secure northern Mali, U.S. policy also rules out direct American participation in ground combat operations. With the distrust of foreign powers exhibited by the Malian population, this is probably a wise decision. Any support from the U.S. will likely come in the form of financial backing like the recent support to African Union (AU) operations in Somalia. The U.S. has spent at least $550 million on that mission since 2007, aiding approximately 18,000 African peacemakers.[100]  This, of course, is contingent upon Mali returning a free and fairly elected democratic state, without the influence of the March

[98] "Mali: Restore Democracy Then Liberate the North - U.S. Official Johnnie Carson," AllAfrica, last updated October 1, 2012, http://allafrica.com/stories/201210011169.html.

[99] "Analysis:  Intervention options in northern Mali," IRIN, last updated June 21, 2012, http://www.irinnews.org/printreport.aspx?reportid=95698; "Mali crisis focus for Clinton's Algeria visit," BBC World News, last updated October 29, 2012, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-20121800.

[100] Luis Ramirez, "Pentagon Weighs U.S. Military Options in Mali," Voice of America, last updated October 23, 2012, http://www.voanews.com/content/mali-us-military/1532074.html; Saul Loeb, "U.S. pushes Algieria to support military intervention in Mali," The Washington Post, last updated October 29, 2012, http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/us-pushes-algeria-to-support-military-intervention-in-mali/2012/10/29/fee8df44–21a3–11e2–92f8–7f9c4daf276a_story_1.html; Alfred de Montesquiou, AP "U.S. looks to effort in Somalia as model for Mali solution," The Washington Post, last updated October 11, 2012, http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-looks-to-effort-in-somalia-as-model-for-mali-solution/2012/10/11/0385b36e-13c7–11e2-bf18-a8a596df4bee_story.html.

coup leaders. In April, the military officers installed former speaker of parliament Dioncounda Traoré as interim president for one year, charged with overseeing the return of governance to civilian control. The status of this transition back to civilian rule is unknown; however, ECOWAS lifted sanctions following Traoré's assumption of the presidency. U.S. military aid is still suspended as of November 2012. If and when it is lifted, U.S. policy should focus on the intent of the TSCTP. This includes efforts to strengthen regional counterterrorism forces (and the coordination between these forces) as well as assistance by the Department of State and USAID to strengthen governmental capacity. Institutional reform must be included in this program to build a reliable, self-sustaining military force capable of securing the entire country from threats to security, meeting and defeating those threats prior to any kind of negotiations with insurgents.[101]

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[101] "Mali Profile," BBC News Africa, last updated November 13, 2012, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13881372; "Mali junta says power transfer 'within days,'" AlJazeera Africa, last updated April 7, 2012, http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2012/04/201246232416740914.html; Peter Tinti, "What has the U.S. already tried in Mali?" The Christian Science Monitor, last updated November 20, 2012, http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Africa/2012/1120/What-has-the-U.S.-already-tried-in-Mali; The Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership program overview, USAFRICOM, last accessed December 2, 2012, http://www.africom.mil/tsctp.asp.

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